

Chapter 1

Illinois Coastal Management Program Outline

Illinois is dedicated to protecting and managing our natural and cultural resources along our magnificent 63 mile stretch of Lake Michigan shoreline. During the last two centuries, Illinois' coast has undergone nearly a complete metamorphosis with its monumental hydrologic modifications, enormous industrial impacts, building of an excellent transportation infrastructure, and creation of skyscrapers that grace our shoreline. With all these changes, it is remarkable that our coastal resources still contain some of the richest, rarest and most diverse complex of plant and animal species and natural habitat areas in the state.

Our shoreline is highly urbanized and has been subject to considerable stress from intense land use and competition to serve the economic and workforce needs and demands of this densely populated area. Lake and Cook counties are currently home to 6 million people and are projected to be home to nearly 6.8 million people by 2030. It is estimated that more than 20 million visitors visit the Lake Michigan shoreline each year. Illinois Beach State Park alone has over 2 million visitors annually. Lake Michigan provides water supply to nearly 7 million Illinois residents (over half of the state's entire population).

The environmental legacy of our industrial sites and the needs and demands of a growing and vibrant urban community create a complex set of issues to balance as we invest in programs that seek to restore our ecosystems and meet the increasing demands for open space, recreation, and public access.

Coastal Management Program Goals:

The broad goal of the Illinois Coastal Management Program (ICMP) is to preserve, protect, restore, and where possible, enhance the coastal resources in Illinois for this and succeeding generations. A thematic goal for the program is to improve the quality of decision-making by the state and coastal communities resulting in more effective outcomes. The ICMP will achieve this by:

- Enhancing the state's role in supporting and coordinating partnerships among local, state and federal agencies and organizations in the planning and management of these efforts. The ICMP will strengthen local stakeholder capacity to initiate and continue effective coastal management consistent with identified state standards and criteria.
- Facilitating the development of a shared vision and policies for the protection, restoration and enhancement of our coastal resources. The ICMP will play an important role in shaping coastal ecosystem management policies, streamlining procedures, and providing a clearinghouse for information on regulatory programs governing our coast. The program will also increase public awareness, involvement and opportunities for citizens to participate in decisions affecting our Lake Michigan coastal resources.
- Coordinate agency and stakeholder efforts in the coastal region that, using a regional perspective, identify priorities and implement local projects to address those priorities. The ICMP will provide a strong voice to advocate the wise and balanced use of the coastal environment and the recognition in federal, state, and local policies of the uniqueness of the coastal environment.
- Leveraging ICMP and other funds to maximize impact of local projects. The ICMP will provide assistance in the implementation and enforcement of existing programs, which manage uses with a significant impact on the coastal environment where gaps or weaknesses are identified.

Coastal Management Program Development:

Illinois, for a variety of reasons has not developed a comprehensive management plan for its Lake Michigan shoreline. While very good project specific work is being done on the ground, this illustrates why we need a robust and effective Coastal Zone Program. This absence of a comprehensive shared vision reduces our competitiveness in securing federal grants for restoration projects and compromises our ability to adequately engage all Illinois Great Lakes stakeholders.

A priority for the Illinois Coastal Management Program is to continue development of the comprehensive management plan (ILMP) already underway for its Lake Michigan watershed and shoreline. This plan is designed to sustain a vision of the ICMP over time. The ILMP will provide a solid foundation for and shared vision for the program moving forward because it will be developed in an open and transparent process that is inclusive of as many stakeholders as possible.

The ILMP will be a powerful tool to communicate the vision and identity of the ICMP program because it features dynamic, real time participation and feedback. It promises to, right out of the box, establish and energize the role of the ICMP in supporting and coordinating partnerships among local, state and federal agencies and organizations in the planning and management of these efforts.

The ILMP will utilize the regional plans that have been developed by the following organizations:

- USEPA's Great Lakes National Program Office
- Chicago Wilderness Biodiversity Recovery Plan
- Chicago Metropolis 2020 plan

Illinois has tremendous assets to harness and leverage. These assets include representatives of local and county governments, scientific institutions and museums, universities, state and federal agencies, non-profit advocacy organizations, landowners, sporting groups, and citizens. However to successfully develop the kind of shared vision necessary for the restoration of the Lake Michigan shoreline, Illinois will have an open and transparent process that includes as many stakeholders as possible.

We are using the power of open source collaborative technology to produce a management plan for the Lake Michigan coast. When information is open and individuals have the means to contribute, everyone shares in the responsibility for improvement. Informed citizens become engaged citizens. Engaged citizens contribute opinions, ideas, and effort. It's time to give citizens a new voice. Open source also creates a meritocracy, an environment where everyone can contribute, and ideas are adopted and rewarded based on their merit. A meritocracy recognizes that the best ideas can come from anyone, anywhere.

The ICMP will initially engage the Citizen Advisory Group and Technical Advisory Committee to populate a Wikipedia style internet site to use in the development of the ILMP. The opportunity this project offers is the development of a shared vision that can guide ICMP efforts for preserving, protecting, restoring and where possible enhancing the coastal resources in Illinois for this and succeeding generations.

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The ICMP will reflect the collective vision of the region and will be the final decision maker in implementing this shared vision for our future will guide the development of projects administered by the Coastal Management program and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI).

Coastal Management Program Initial Priorities

The ICMP will initially focus on efforts to address the following program areas which are also outlined in the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy. The ICMP will describe desired outcomes, prioritize strategies for achieving them, and suggest site specific projects:

- **Invasive Species.** The ICMP will include mitigation and long term sustainable solutions to terrestrial invasive species. Strategies for controlling aquatic invasive species will initially focus on the Chicago and Sanitary Ship Canal and the hydrologic/ecological separation of the Illinois River basin from the Lake Michigan basin.
- **Habitat, Ecosystems and Natural Area Restoration.** The ICMP will address the undeveloped portions of shoreline in Cook and Lake Counties immediately north of Chicago to the Wisconsin state line. These areas include, North Point Marina & Illinois Beach State Park including the Dead River & Kellogg Creek Watersheds, Waukegan Beach, the Great Lakes Naval Training Center, Spring Bluff forest preserve, and wooded ravines along the Lake Michigan bluffs. The Chicago River & North Shore Channel River Corridors & Wilmette Harbor are increasingly important habitat corridors and will be included in the ICMP. On the South Side of the City of Chicago, the Little Calumet & Grand Calumet River corridors, Lake Calumet and Calumet River and the surrounding wetland areas are an important habitat area but also contain some of the most degraded industrial areas. These areas will also be addressed.
- **Areas of Concern.** Waukegan harbor is the one designated AOC in Illinois. Six of 14 use impairments have been identified for the Waukegan AOC. The impairments include restrictions on fish and wildlife consumption, benthos degradation, restrictions on dredging, beach closings, degradation of phytoplankton populations and loss of fish and wildlife habitat. The ICMP will develop a priority list for projects in Waukegan Harbor, Waukegan Lakefront & Waukegan River Watershed to remove these impairments.
- **Persistent Bio-accumulative Toxins.** Toxic issues in northeastern Illinois are generally legacy issues from our industrial past. They are mostly well documented and tend to be concentrated in the river sediments, brownfields and superfund sites. The ICMP will develop site specific strategies for each property and develop priorities for long term restoration strategies as appropriate.
- **Sustainable Development.** The Illinois coast is primarily urban with the few exceptions mentioned previously. The ICMP will focus on the development of strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change, including reducing individual carbon footprints, and the expanding the use of our natural resources to act as natural carbon sinks.
- **Non-point source.** Non-point source pollution is primarily related to storm-water management which for the most part is managed, treated and ultimately discharged away from the Lake Michigan Basin. Despite the investment of billions of dollars over the decades, basement flooding, and diversions of untreated sewage into Lake Michigan are not uncommon across the region. The ICMP will facilitate an important discussion of expanding the use of green infrastructure to control storm-water, promote groundwater recharge and reduce flooding.

- **Information and Indicators.** The ICMP will identify existing and ongoing data collections and indicators. It will also identify gaps in data and develop priorities for future data collection efforts. The ICMP will also assist in the collaborative development of sustainability indicators for the region.

Coastal Management Program Additional Priorities

- **Public Access and Recreation.** Illinois' shoreline is increasingly used for recreation at unprecedented levels. The demand for public access to the lake and recreation resources has outstripped the supply and this demand will only continue to grow in the future. There will always be a need for expanded and improved recreational facilities and services. The ICMP will provide technical and financial assistance to acquire new, add or improve public recreational sites and facilities, and to create new or improve public access sites.
- **Economic Development.** Our coastal communities are essential components of a strong Illinois economy. The ICMP will provide assistance to improve management programs and support state and local government efforts to identify and designate areas especially suited for water-related economic development and in redeveloping port and waterfront areas. The ICMP will provide technical and financial assistance in the regional planning process for transmission and transportation routes.
- **Climate Change.** A warming climate is projected to result in a decline in ice cover and a greater rate of evaporation causing a drop in the level of Lake Michigan. These changes will affect ecosystems, water quality, water supply, and navigation. Warmer water temperatures and increased run-off from extreme rainstorms will likely increase the risk of water-borne diseases. The ICMP will provide support to projects focused on adaptation to the effects of climate change in NE Illinois

The ICMP will assess emerging issues, develop policies and management approaches, undertake programs and projects in partnership with communities and local agencies, and enforce program policies to balance development and conservation.

In establishing a vision and strategy for the ICMP, it is important to note that as a new program, the ICMP will need to develop, mature and be flexible to change to address the needs of the state and coastal communities. Full participation and engagement by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and the Citizens Advisory Group (CAG) are a key to identifying and establishing processes in new directions, priorities, and approaches for making the most of the ICMP.

The level of engagement in the Great Lakes among policymakers is higher than it has ever been in the last several years. Working cooperatively with other states and provinces, the ICMP should serve to strengthen the planning, policies and programs to address the wide range of Great Lakes issues and aid in developing a sound comprehensive management program for Lake Michigan and the entire Great Lakes basin.